

MARIA GIMENO

The Hidden Side of the Moon. Women in Landscape.

Cutlog 2012

Paris, 18-21 October 2012, Bourse de Commerce de Paris

Gowen Contemporary is delighted to announce the first solo exhibition by Spanish artist Maria Gimeno in France and at an international art fair.

Gimeno explores the integration of subjectivity processes. Her introspective work coexists with others with an openly socio-political connotation or drawing their inspiration from external multi-cultural sources. Gimeno's visual language, using a variety of techniques, draws its inspiration from the individual and collective memory, integrating a number of experiences specific to the feminine world, such as embroidery, knitting or other techniques using repetitive movements. Often Gimeno's work involves a direct interaction with the viewer.

Women are at the heart of this exhibition. They hide and reappear by turning into a contradictory reflection of our age.

The body of work presented in this exhibition of about thirty pieces conceived specifically for Cutlog 2012, includes a series of 4 embroideries, *Mujeres en el Paisaje, 2012*, a work which depicts portraits of women of different ages merged into the landscape at symbolic moments of the day, dawn, midday, sunset and night. Linear time blends with cyclical time without a start and a finish and the women hide, almost invisible and forgotten in the landscape, giving shape to the land and sky.

In *La Maya se Desviste, 2009-12*, a series of drawings of mixed technique, the act of women undressing assumes deep significance and spurs reflection. Reference to the famous work by Goya, not lacking a certain sense of humour, leads us indirectly to a particularly significant moment in Spanish history, the invasion of Napoleonic troops. The drawings in this series are individually framed in wooden and glass boxes which have been painted by the artist. Spectators have to find a viewpoint through the layer of paint in order to be able to catch sight of the drawing and the subject, Maya undressing, hidden in the box. This series of drawings is in close conjunction with the performance that Gimeno presents in this exhibition, *Sin Titulo, Destejiendo una Prision, 2012*, which consists of unravelling a large piece of wool knitted in the shape of a burka. Little by little the performance unveils the body of a naked woman. In the same style, the video *You Go my Way, I'll Go Yours, 2012*, a film that the artist made in an Arab country, depicts two women, the artist and a native woman, swap their clothes.

These pieces express identity, the concealment of beauty, the protective shell, what is hiding, desire... Is the burka the prison or on the contrary is it nudity or fragility?

Sakineh III, 2012, continues a series of sculptures that the artist started in 2010. Tiny embroidery depicts the only known portrait of Sakineh Mohamed Ashtiani, a woman condemned to death by stoning for adultery by the Iranian authorities and still pending execution. Her face is hidden by a stone that the spectator has to lift to uncover it. The unpleasant feeling of ease felt when lifting up the stone contrasts with the weight and the difficulty of replacing it subsequently in the starting position. After having briefly attracted the attention of the press and public opinion worldwide Sakineh no longer interests anyone. In the new version of the sculpture presented here, Sakineh's face has faded and her features are blurred.

Cabeza, 2012, is the sculpted head of a woman hidden beneath a cloth. 'It reminds me of when I was little and the furniture in my house was covered by a white cloth. It was as if it had been forgotten, the shape could only be imagined' (Gimeno, 2012). The head can only be seen by the owner of the work. More than just a reference to the Islamic veil, this work explores the question of the desire to hide and possess beauty and richness in an exclusive and privileged way, whether a woman, a work of art or something else.

Maria Gimeno was born in 1970 in Zamora, Spain and studied Fine Arts at the University of Complutense in Madrid, followed by design and photography. She lives and works in Madrid.

Selected past solo exhibitions include: a solo show at the Spanish Embassy, Sanaa, Yemen (2012); 'Destejiendo el Tiempo', performance in Grassy, Madrid Abierto Festival (2011); 'Voyages Sans Frontières', Gowen Contemporary, Geneva (2011); 'Mar Interior', Cervantes Institute, Belgrade (2010); 'Il Buco/Saturno', Lucas Carrieri Art Gallery, Berlin (2009); 'Tejido de Fragilidades', Fragil arte contemporaneo, curated by Giulietta Speranza (2008); 'Solo Puedo Ser Yo', Pilar Parra y Romero Gallery, Madrid (2005); 'Del Proyecto Escultórico', Art Center Joven, Madrid, curated by J. Marín Medina (2000).

Group exhibitions include: 'Cortar Lastres: Poligamia', Rafael Perz Hernandez Gallery, Madrid (2012); 'Correspondencia', Antico Municipio, San Donato Val di Comino, FR, curated by Bruno Corrà (2011); 'Encuentro', La nave Gallery, Altamira, Gijón (2009); Taller Jannis Kounellis, Villa Iris, Santander (2009); X Bienal de La Habana, Cuba (2009); Ajenos, Palacio San Isidoro, Palermo (2008); Premio Bancaja. IVAM (2007); 'Painting Identities', Pilar Parra Gallery (2004).

Maria Gimeno's works can be found in the private collections of the Fondation Juan Entrecanales Foundation, UBS Collection, the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Caja Madrid Foundation.

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